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ABSTRACT

This publication presents the American Federation of Teachers' (AFT') convention resolution on standards-based assessment and accountability. It reaffirms the AFT's commitment to high standards for all students and to the development of a standards-based system of education. It recommends that to be successful, it is necessary to create a system with high standards, a rigorous curriculum, professional development, adequate resources, an assessment system aligned to the standards and curriculum, intervention for students at risk, and rewards and consequences for achievement. A question and answer section discusses such issues as: Why not just say "no" to testing?; Why is the AFT calling for a mid-course correction for standards-based reform?; Whose responsibility is it to develop and implement the various standards-based elements called for by the AFT?; and Will the steps called for by the AFT diminish professional autonomy? Suggestions are presented for standards-based accountability (e.g., tests are relatively inexpensive, how standards are formulated and measured makes a difference, and gains in scores do not necessarily signal true improvements) and for policymakers (e.g., set high but attainable standards; develop standards, then assessments; and set long- and short-term school goals for all schools to reach). (SM)

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